

August-December 2013 Area Plan Public Comment Summary



Bunch Hollow Conservation Area

Missouri Department of Conservation
February 2014



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
Public Input Summary	4
Demographic Summary of Respondents	5
Themes and issues identified	8
Appendix A. Iron Bridge Access Area Plan Public Comments	12
Appendix B. Bunch Hollow Area Plan Public Comments	12
Appendix C. Truman Reservoir Management Lands Area Plan Public Comments	13
Appendix D. Viola Smith Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments	15
Appendix E. Kessler Memorial Area Plan Public Comments	15
Appendix F. Maple Leaf Lake Area Plan Public Comments	15
Appendix G. Sni-A-Bar Area Plan Public Comments	16
Appendix H. Urban Wild Acres of St. Louis Region Area Plan Public Comments	16
Appendix I. Central Region Missouri River Accesses Area Plan Public Comments	17
Appendix J. Cuivre Island Area Plan Public Comments	17
Appendix K. Reifsnider State Forest Area Plan Public Comments	17
Appendix L. Rockwoods Reservation Area Plan Public Comments	25
Appendix M. Bee Hollow Area Plan Public Comments	57

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Missouri Department of Conservation is seeking public input as we develop and revise conservation area management plans.
- For the period of August-December 2013, 26 area plans (covering 24 Conservation Areas and 26 Accesses) were posted online for month-long public comment periods (mdc.mo.gov/areaplans).
- Comment periods were advertised locally with notices posted on Conservation Area bulletin boards, contacts made with neighboring landowners, and in some cases news releases or other outreach methods were used.
- During this time period (August-December 2013), we received a total of 125 comments on 13 area plans.
- 11 plans received 5 or fewer comments. Themes and issues identified for these plans were diverse and included support for terrestrial resource management, opposing use of pesticides and herbicides, concern about low numbers of quail/deer/squirrel, requests for equestrian and hiking trails, support for adding parking lots/shooting ranges/ADA accessible waterfowl hunting blinds/fish cleaning stations, concern about litter, suggestions to sell and acquire land, and more.
- Reifsnider State Forest received 26 comments, many of which were from neighbors expressing concern about the unstaffed shooting range – citing concern with noise, alcohol-use, fully-automatic weapons, and lead contamination of streams. Suggestions to improve the range included closing range, sound abatement structures, limiting days/hours of shooting, and staffing range (at least on weekends).
- Rockwoods Reservation (a high-interest area plan) received 73 comments during the December comment period for the draft area plan. A previous idea-gathering stage comment period was held in Summer 2013, and 134 comments were received at that time. A primary theme with the Rockwoods Reservation area plan was disappointment from rock climbers that the Department would not allow rock climbing at Rockwoods Reservation. Of the 73 comments received, 43% were from out-of-state residents.
- Area planning teams are responding to themes and issues as they finalize area management plans. Final area plans with responses to public comment themes and issues are posted online (mdc.mo.gov/areaplans).

Public Input Summary:

For the period of August-December 2013, 26 area plans (covering 24 Conservation Areas and 26 Accesses) were posted for month-long public comment periods. Comment periods were advertised locally with notices posted on Conservation Area bulletin boards, contacts made with neighboring landowners, and in some cases news releases or other outreach methods were used. During this time we received a total of 125 comments on 13 area plans (see Table 1).

Table 1. Number of comments received by plan, August-December 2013.

Comment Month	Area Plan	MDC Region	Comments Received
August 2013	Coldwater Access	Southeast	0
August 2013	Iron Bridge Access	Southeast	1
August 2013	Lon Sanders Canyon CA	Southeast	0
August 2013	Bunch Hollow CA	Northwest	4
August 2013	Truman Reservoir Management Lands	Kansas City	5
August 2013	Viola Smith CA	Central	1
September 2013	Buffalo Wallow Prairie CA	Southwest	0
September 2013	Bushwhacker Lake CA	Southwest	0
September 2013	Kessler Memorial WA	St. Louis	2
September 2013	Maple Leaf Lake CA	Kansas City	4
October 2013	Rader Access	Southwest	0
October 2013	Charity Access	Southwest	0
October 2013	Big John, Moon Valley, Prosperine Aceceses	Southwest	0
October 2013	Anna M. Adams, Hazelgreen, Hull Ford, Davis Ford, Drynob, and Long Ford Accesses	Southwest	0
October 2013	Turkey Creek CA	Southwest	0
October 2013	Riverside CA & Funk Memorial CA	Southeast	0
October 2013	Sni-A-Bar CA	Kansas City	2
October 2013	Millsap Bridge Access	St. Louis	0
October 2013	St. Louis Urban Wild Acres	St. Louis	2
October 2013	Central Region Missouri River Accesses	Central	1
November 2013	Truman Access	St. Louis	0
December 2013	Cuivre Island CA	St. Louis	1
December 2013	Reifsnider State Forest	St. Louis	26
December 2013	Rockwoods Reservation	St. Louis	73
December 2013	Bee Hollow CA	Northeast	3
December 2013	Griffiths Memorial CA	Northeast	0

Demographic Summary of Respondents

Who responded?

We received 125 comments from 122 respondents (Table 2). Several respondents submitted multiple comments, so the total number of responses is greater than the total number of respondents.

Table 2. Respondents by respondent category, if self-identified.

Organization Type	Count
Individual citizens	110
Local government agency (City of Bridgeton Parks and Recreation Department)	1
University (University of Central Missouri)	1
Volunteer Group (Missouri Master Naturalists – Confluence Chapter)	1
NGO (Great Rivers Greenway)	1
Rock climbing organizations (Missouri Climbers Coalition, Mid-Mo Climbers, Kansas City Climbing Club, American Alpine Club, Access Fund)	5
Homeowners Associations (Innsbrook Owners' Association)	3
TOTAL	122

How they responded:

Table 3. Total number of each response received.

Response Type	Count	Percent
Web Comment Form	79	63%
E-mail to Director Ziehmer	45	36%
Phone call	1	1%
TOTAL	125	100%

Where respondents are from:

Table 4. Total number of respondents by location.

State	Count	Percent
Missouri	92	75%
Out of state responses* (Arkansas, Colorado, District of Columbia, Iowa, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, North Carolina, New Jersey, New Mexico, Nevada, Ohio, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington)	30	25%
TOTAL	122	100%

*All out of state respondents were proponents of rock climbing at Rockwoods Reservation.

Figure 1. Map of respondents by zipcode.

The pinpoints below represent the geographic center of zip code boundaries from which a public comment was received (they do not represent actual street addresses). Not everyone who commented provided a zip code, so the total number of pinpoints is fewer than the number of comments received.

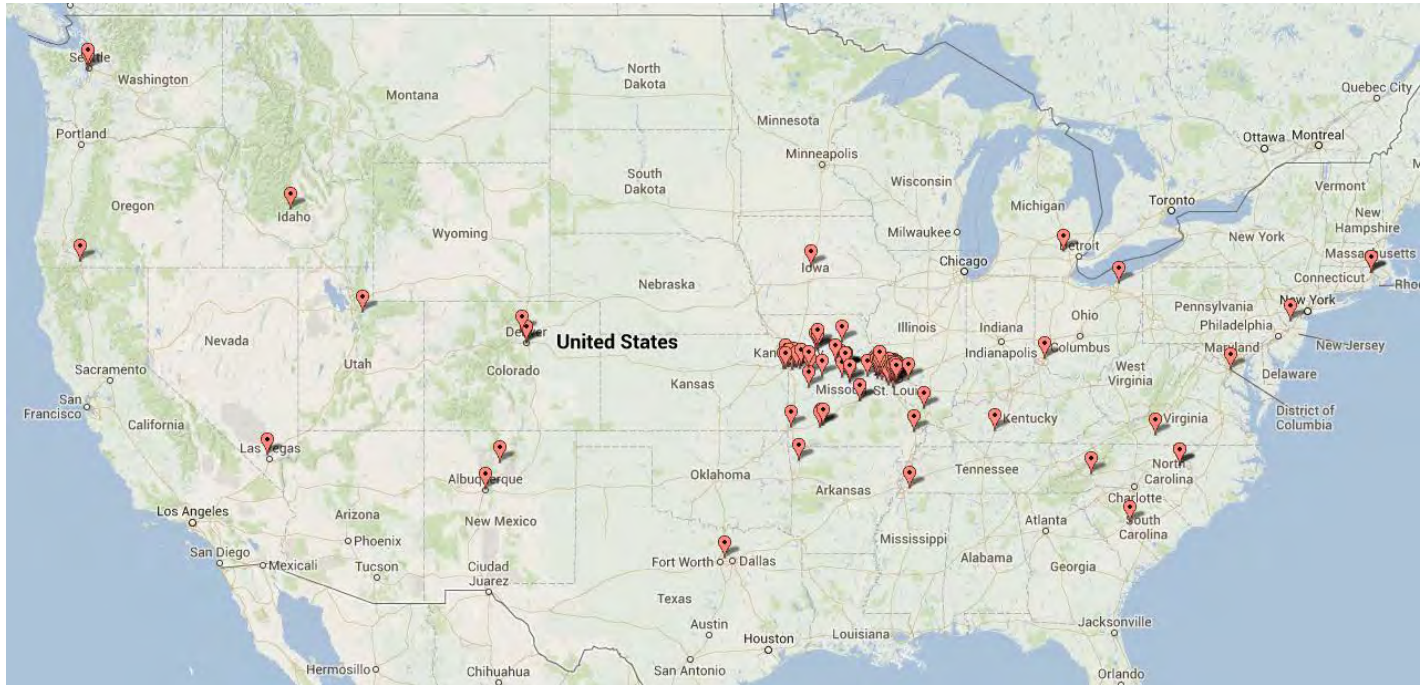
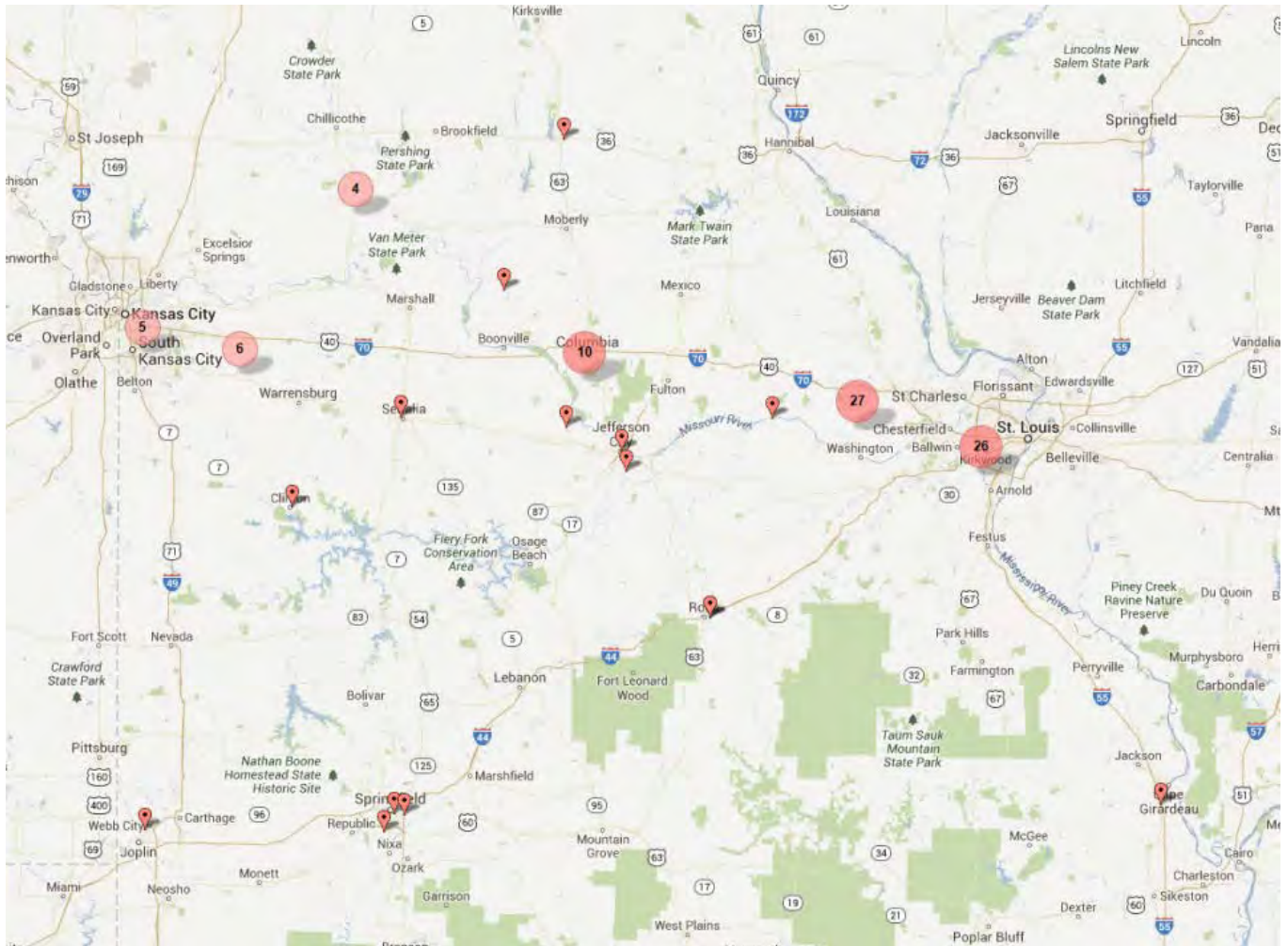


Figure 2. Map of Missouri respondents by zipcode.

The pinpoints below represent the geographic center of zip code boundaries from which a public comment was received (they do not represent actual street addresses). Not everyone who commented provided a zip code, so the total number of pinpoints is fewer than the number of comments received. Shaded circles with numbers in them represent multiple responses from a single zip code



Themes and issues identified through the August-December 2013 area plan public comment period:

Terrestrial Resource Management

- Support for prescribed fire and thinning.
- Suggests larger tracts of bottomland forest (beyond riparian corridors).
- Opposes use of pesticides or herbicides for forest or pond management.
- Support for row crops to be pesticide and herbicide free.
- Concern with amount of row crops. Would like to see more native plants/wetland restoration.
- Support greater emphasis on natural community management.
- Suggests adding ruffed grouse habitat.
- Concerned about low deer and squirrel numbers on area.
- Concern about low numbers of quail and increasing fescue.
- Support greater emphasis on restoring native grasslands and wetlands and less of an emphasis on managing glades and woodlands.
- Support managed grazing as a wildlife management tool.
- Support management that reduces invasive species and enhances native species.
- Suggests washing off mowing equipment after mowing infested areas.
- Concern about musk thistle control not working.
- Suggests utilizing volunteers for invasive species control and prescribed burns.

Aquatic Resource Management

- Suggests fish stocking of lake.
- Suggests a low-impact bridge or other improvement for the creek crossing (access to area is sometimes blocked during rains or winter snows).

Public Use Management

Trails

- Support adding more and/or longer equestrian trails.
- Support adding hiking trails.
- Suggests connecting hiking trails.
- Support allowing non-motorized wheeled vehicles on interior roads and paths.
- Supports not allowing bicycles, horses, or motorized vehicles on area trails.
- Supports allowing off-trail access for mushroom hunting and wildlife viewing.
- Appreciates proposed trail improvements.
- Concern with gradual conversion of Trail Among the Trees trail to a crushed rock surface.

- Suggests improving trail signage.
- Suggests trail maintenance and invasive species removal volunteer work days.

Amenities

- Support adding a parking lot at a different location.
- Support adding a pit toilet.
- Support adding primitive camping sites.
- Suggests adding a parking lot, a canoe launch, and a clear path to the “Big Pit” pond.
- Suggests opening the visitor’s center on weekends.

Shooting Ranges

- Support adding a shooting range.
- Support changing target backgrounds more often at range.
- Support removing archery range.
- Suggests continued upkeep and maintenance for the shooting range.
- Suggests expanding shooting range facility.
- Suggests closing shooting range.
- Concern that shooting range is unsafe (stray bullets, alcohol use by those using range, overcrowding, fully automatic weapons mentioned).
- Concern about noise from shooting range. Suggests sound abatement structures. Suggests limiting days/hours of shooting.
- Concern about impact of lead from shooting range on local creek system, ground water and wildlife. How is the issue being addressed?
- Suggests staffing the shooting range (at least on the weekends).

Hunting

- Support current and additional dove hunting opportunities.
- Support adding good quality ADA accessible waterfowl hunting blind.
- Appreciate how the area is managed (especially for rabbit hunting with Beagles).
- Support continuing ban on single shot hunting/target practice.
- Suggests allowing archery and muzzleloader deer hunting only on area.
- Suggests antlerless deer hunting only on this area.
- Suggests managed youth hunt on this area.
- Supports managed hunts at Rockwoods Reservation. Suggests increasing number of managed hunts or deer harvested to manage deer population.

Fishing

- Support adding a fish cleaning station.
- Suggests methods for fish disposal (Asian carp) at Missouri River accesses.
- Suggests cleaning up the fishing lake.

Other

- Concern about littering.
- Concern about hunters parking on private property.
- Suggests more enforcement for Wildlife Code on this area.
- Concern that Schuetzenground Road may not be able to support additional traffic to the area.
- Suggests opening area to rock climbing.
- Suggests further dialog on rock climbing issue.
- The Department allows mountain biking, hiking, geocaching, and paddling on conservation areas. Why not rock climbing?
- Suggests a test phase of allowing rock climbing at Rockwoods Reservations.
- Supports the continued allowance of dogs at Rockwoods Reservation.
- Supports “share the road” opportunity for bicycles on Glencoe Road.
- Supports keeping gate closed on north end of area.
- Supports caves being closed to public.
- Suggests improving native plant gardens around the visitor’s center, including interpretive information about the importance of pollinators.
- Suggests a “bioblitz” at Rockwoods Reservation.

Administrative Considerations

- Suggests that MDC consider selling this property.
- Would like to see additional land acquired, if available.
- Concern that this is a strategic plan rather than an operational management plan.
- Support reviewing area plan every five years (rather than 15 years).
- Concern that fencing agreements have a sunset provision.
- Agree with management practices described in area plan.
- Continued support from City of Bridgeton for their maintenance of Hickory Woods Conservation Area.
- Concern that the plan doesn’t acknowledge rapid growth of Warren County and potential impact to area.
- Would like to see a carbon sequestration value of the forest recognized and part of this plan.

Next Steps:

Area planning teams are responding to themes and issues identified for their particular area plan. Area plans with responses to comment categories are approved by RCT, UCT, and Division Chief and then will be posted on the public website as a final area plan (mdc.mo.gov/areaplans).

Appendix A. Draft Iron Bridge Access Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (August 1-31, 2013).

I have been an adjoining landowner to the Iron Bridge Access area for about 15 years. During this time, it seems like there are fewer and fewer people using the property. Years ago, there would be a hunting camp set up every deer season. Today, the only users I observe are day-camping in hot weather on the gravel bar. This would be fine if only everyone would remove their trash when they leave. Much of it ends up in the water and floats downstream. Often glass bottles get broken and contribute to the hazards in the shallow stream. Access to the creek is mostly limited to this gravel bar because of the steepness of the bank on the rest of the property. The scenic old iron bridge has been replaced with a modern concrete structure. The parking lot is gone. It seems to me that this may be a good time for the department to consider selling this small isolated piece of property and to redirect their resources to other more effective areas benefitting more users.

Appendix B. Draft Bunch Hollow Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (August 1-31, 2013).

I live across the road from Bunch Hollow and I would like to see it back to the way it was with the natural grasses and timber. Right now it looks like to me it has been let go. There are a lot of places that are so thick with briars and brush that a person can't even walk through let alone a deer or turkey. I think with planned burning and thinning of the timber would be a great start to get it back the way it was. Also if you decided to have row crops I would like to see it pesticide and herbicide free. I think a few hiking trails would be nice I know my wife and I would love it. Thank you for letting me give you my thoughts.

would like to see a shooting range added as the nearest one to northern Carroll / southern Livingston counties is Pooey or Gallatin.

I would like to see more equestrian trails added to Bunch Hollow. There is a short trail there that is nice to ride. However, with over 3000 acres at Bunch Hollow, there is plenty of room for more equestrian trails. They do not have to be wide enough to drive a vehicle down. Trails can be ridden single file and marked with plastic ribbon tied on tree limbs. I think a lot of people in the area would enjoy and use added trails.

My husband would like to see more rough habitat converted to quail habitat.

Thanks for the opportunity to make these requests.

I would like to see longer trails for horses as well as more trails available throughout Bunch Hollow.

Appendix C. Draft Truman Reservoir Management Lands Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (August 1-31, 2013).

First off, I want to commend you (MDC) for providing a clear and concise plan on what is going on in regards to area improvement. I, as well as most, think MDC does a wonderful job of providing resources for humans and wildlife alike. It is nice being kept abreast of what type of management plans are being set in place and the time-table.

I am an avid waterfowl hunter and I am also a below knee amputee. As much as I love waterfowl hunting, it is very difficult to navigate certain areas of a marsh with only one "good" leg. I was hoping there would be a plan to provide a decent* ADA accessible blind, like the ones that are present at select conservation areas across the state. I placed an asterik beside "decent", because I have hunted numerous ADA blinds at conservation areas and there are some good blinds, and terrible blinds. Placing the blind in a decent area with good cover is a must. I greatly appreciate when staff puts in all the hard work they do to create these blinds, but some are in terrible places and stick out terribly. In my opinion, a model blind is the one placed at Bob Brown conservation area. it is far enough away from the parking lot to not flare ducks, but accessible and hidden well.

I know this isn't at the top of the priority list for a management plan, but I wanted to provide you with a concern of many people. I work in the field of prosthetics and see it first hand, how many people have given up hunting/fishing/outdoor activities due to the lack of accessibility. Again, I appreciate all you all do to provide such great opportunities for Missouri citizens to enjoy the outdoors.

Thanks,

(Please excuse any grammatical or spelling errors. I did not have much time to type.)

I would like to see more of an emphasis on restoring and maintaining the native grasslands and wetlands and less of an emphasis on the glade/woodland areas. I also am very much in favor of coninuing to provide and improve dove hunting opportunities; especially for youth hunters.

The Plan is very generic without particular specifics, though I am sure that is by design. The Plan lacks any clear and definable, let alone documentable goals; it only outlines very generic terms, such as "maintain and develop". Without specific goals and objectives for which to measure against, what is the purpose of the exercise?

I believe a 15 year plan for the management of non forest lands is too long a term. I recognize the desire to synchronize with the Forest Plan, however on non forest lands succession and invasive species as just two examples can create situations beyond the point of no return or at such extreme cost it is not feasible to "reset", leading to the loss of quality habitat - particularly that of ground nesting birds, one of the identified concerns within the Plan. A 5 year review, with rewrite only if necessary would be more applicable with each third anniversary coinciding with the Forest Plan.

Regarding Terrestrial Resource Management Considerations:

There is no mention of managed grazing within the Plan. Though there is a statement allowing wiggle room: "Other practices as they become understood and available for use"; and it is entirely absent from Management Objectives. I know this is a hot topic which the "experts" cannot agree upon but believe there is recent research and ongoing research which supports managed grazing as a viable tool in wildlife management, even beneficial when compared to haying, which is commonly done on management lands.

There is no emphasis placed on natural community management aside from Management Objective 5 which can only be drawn by inference. If the Department is interested in long term economic benefit there is no better investment than in restoring and maintaining natural communities which provide superior food and cover throughout most of the year.

I believe the plan as-is, is more appropriately a strategic plan than a management plan. If it is to be a management plan it should contain specific, obtainable and measureable goals.

I would like non-motorized wheeled vehicles to be legal on interior roads and paths that are used by area workers to access the interior via trucks, tractors, etc.

I have read the stated area plan. It is well done. I am very impressed with how friendly, helpful and knowledgeable that Mrs. Hilty is at the Clinton office. She has provided me with a lot of great maps and information about the area. I started coming here 7 years ago and it is truly an extraordinary well-managed hunting area. The Golden Valley range is well used and maybe should have the target backgrounds changed before they get in such bad shape. Thanks for a great area for Missouri citizens.

Appendix D. Draft Roger and Viola Wachal Smith Conservation Area Management Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (August 1-31, 2013).

Please consider adding a parking lot on birdhaven - at top of grade at county line for drainage purposes - near the termination of the "access trail". Folks park along the road during seasons and sometimes don't do a very good job. I wouldn't think a huge lot would be required, nothing like the others on birdhaven. We've seen 4 vehicles parked along the road and generally block the access trail entrance - (no parking signs there ?)

perhaps a pit toilet at parking lot near Pea Ridge?

primitive camping sites as well as on parking lot?

Appendix E. Draft Kessler Memorial Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (September 1-30, 2013)

Removing the little used archery range is a great idea. Once this is accomplished it would be a good idea to increase the hiking opportunities and access. Both of these may increase overall usage. Continued land management to eliminate invasive plants and enhance natives should increase both hunting and hiking usage.

I would like to see the area managed again for dove hunting. They used to plant some dove friendly crops in the middle section where the archery range is now and then do some mowing before the season. I think it would provide a nice area for the local hunters to use. Other than the occasional archery hunter, it doesn't appear that the area has much consistent usage. I realize that the area is fairly small, but improving the dove hunting opportunities would be one way to increase the usage.

Appendix F. Draft Maple Leaf Lake Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (September 1-30, 2013)

I feel the area has great access getting in and out and the lake always looks inviting even from the Interstate. My concern is that I like to quail hunt the area but, it just seems the area is not to the potential that it has. The fescue is really taking over making it hard for me to walk let alone a quail to move around. I have found quail there with my dog but have never harvested any as the covey's were less than 10 birds. Wish we could get more quail on this land and all over the state.

The "plan" to control noxious weeds (primarily musk thistle) is either not in place or not working...would be good at least close to us! I also see the fence responsibilities have a sunset provision?

Also, any way to prevent hunter parking at the edge of my property...the very farthest section of the land type map...on the bend of old stage road. It is still a problem for my wife and I, being at

the corner of our lawn. Otherwise...glad to have Maple leaf behind us....and bordering both our properties and land we rent to farm.

YOU ARE DOING AN EXCELLENT JOB ON THIS LAND,THE ONLY THING I WOULD LIKE TO SUGGEST IS A FISH CLEANING STATION. THANK YOU FOR THE GREAT JOB YOUR DOING !!!!!

This area has been very valuable in the starting of puppy beagles into rabbit hunting. The habitat feathering of field to timbered areas and brush piles along with the remaning fences in the brushy areas have lent themselves wonderfully in the introduction of hunting to my puppies. Using a more traditional way as opposed to the use of a starting pen. I will say "wonderful job" from this sportsman to the MDC. thank you. A Favorite location for my wife and I.

Appendix G. Draft Sni-A-Bar Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (October 1-31, 2013)

As a land owner in the immediate area of the Sni-a-Bar CA I fully agree with the ten year management plan. Thank you for giving me a chance to give my input.

The draft proposal looks positive to us.

We are adjacent land owners to this area. We strongly feel that single-shot hunting/target practice must continue to be prohibited and that this must be enforced for the safety of surrounding property owners.

Appendix H. Draft Urban Wild Acres of St. Louis Region Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (October 1-31, 2013)

I did not see anything on connecting the trails in Tszears Woods. There is a shortage of good trails in Jefferson County. Also, I think if you would get out the word and ask for volunteers you could get help eliminating invasive species from concerned citizens, maybe even have classes on prescribed fire to help on more difficult projects.

The City of Bridgeton will continue to work with MDC with the maintenance of Hickory Woods. We will continue to fight the invasive species and will work with MDC on protecting the creek.

Walt Siemsglusz, Director of Parks

Appendix I. Draft Central Region Missouri River Accesses Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (October 1-31, 2013)

I would like to see methods for fish disposal at ramps. With the amount of silver carp that can get into a boat it would be nice if there was a way to get rid of them without throwing them back into the river.

Appendix J. Draft Cuivre Island Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (December 1-31, 2013)

If land becomes available, definitely purchase it. The more public land for any outdoor activity the better. This also increases the protection of fauna of all kinds. Is it possible to add hiking on the mainland and/or the islands. This is an area where bird watching might occur and access to different areas on foot would be a plus.

Appendix K. Draft Reifsnider State Forest Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (December 1-31, 2013)

I like the idea of adding a parking area and canoe launch at the "Big Pit" pond. Also better accessibility to the pond would be nice. A clear pathway to access the pond is a good idea.

I frequent the area in the spring for spring Turkey season, and the creek crossing sometimes creates a problem during the spring high waters. It caught my attention that no plans were in place for the crossing. I would suggest a low impact bridge.

It is good to see that MDC is concerned in maintaining and managing the public lands in MO. As a person who frequents the public areas for hunting, fishing, target shooting, and camping I appreciate your efforts.

Thank You,

Hello,

I am from St.Charles, and I have always enjoyed going to Reifsnider State Forest for hunting and fishing trips for the past 6 years. I come out and visit about six or more times a year and have had a great trip each time. I am concerned for this area though, it seems that most hunters have noticed ALOT less deer on the area. Even the squirrel count seems to be low. This is a fantastic area with facilities, but again I am concerned. I have noticed on a past trip (2 or so years ago) that bullets from the shooting range being reflected right thru a walking trail. The trail is now wired off thankfully. I think this area gets used a lot as it is. Many people from St.Charles take advantage of this area because of it's location right off highway 70. I think this area would be a great opportunity for the public if the plan would take affect. I think Many people would love to see MDC applying time and work in to this area.

Thanks,

Members of our community have expressed concerns regarding the safety, overcrowding, noise and environmental impacts of the shooting range.

1. Safety: Reports of open and excessive alcohol use by those using the range. Not aware of any other facility that allows for alcohol and guns.
2. Overcrowding: Long queues to use the range. Those in queue also using alcohol during long periods of waiting.
3. Noise: Reports of loud, non-stop shooting noise for long durations.
4. Environmental: Impact of lead leaching into the creek systems and harming wildlife.

I would like the MDC to consider:

- a. Ban alcohol from shooting range
- b. Staff the shooting range during operating hours.
- c. Improve shooting facilities (ie: Weldon Springs shooting facilities)
- d. sound abatement and restricted shooting times.

Thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to contact me for further discussion.

Sincerely,

Charlie Boyce, Trustee
Innsbrook Owners' Association

Many of us in the Warrenton area would like to see Reifsnider be a alternative hunting area. We would like to see more enforcement of the conservation laws in this area. We would like to see the fishing lake cleaned up. We would like for the hunting in Reifsnider to be doe hunting only. We would like to see a well enforced youth hunt in Reifsnider.

I would like to request that sound abatement at the shooting range be part of the management plan. There are a number of relatively inexpensive approaches, including 1) earthen berms, 2) vegetative buffers, or 3) concrete sound mufflers. The advantage of the latter is that they would provide shade and protection for the shooters as well as sound abatement for neighbors (we can hear the shooting all day, every day). It seems like a terrific local resource that simply needs to be upgraded to manage the sound better. I would imagine that this would also benefit other users of the park, as well!

Recommended prioroities:

I am a local resident and park user.

Areas of emphasis:

- 1) Continued upkeep and maintenance of outdoor target range. This is a nice amenity and I use it often.
- 2) Reifsnider scenery and terrain is ideal for hiking trails. I would like to see more trails built as they are limited at present to a small area of the forest.
- 3) Stocking of lake adjacent to target range would be nice but not a top priority over my first two recommendations.

Dear Sir, I am a long time outdoor person and would love to use Reifsnider but I don't even think of going there. I live in ear shot of the shooting range and spent 5 years in the Marine Corps. I know the difference between rapid fire and full automatic fire is. Full automatic fire is not a rare event on that shooting range. I also know how difficult it is to control full auto fire and it make me very uncomfortable when I think of who could be using that type of firearm at the shooting range.

You need to put the same type of range in that you put at the Hinges facility off Hwy 44 and Antire Road. That would help the neighbors feel safer. I would not have to be manned but a roof would do a lot to help stray bullets.

Thank you

Maintain and improve the shooting range.

We are permanent home owners at Innsbrook Resort living on Alpine Lake. We chose to build our home and live here close to nature. Unfortunately we frequently listen to the gunshot from the Reifsnider Shooting Range. This occurs throughout the year. Perhaps hours of shooting could be restricted. Also, I am a horse owner/trail rider. I would appreciate riding trails throughout Reifsnider, again, with the ability to ride during times of no gun fire. Our Innsbrook Garden Club is very interested in native species of plants and any effort to remove invasive plants and encourage natives would be desirable. Let's strive to make Reifsnider more accessible to everyone who enjoys nature, not just the hunters.

Although I live over 2 miles from the shooting range, the noise has increased significantly in the past several years. Much automatic rapid fire shooting is taking place and is not true target shooting. I would like to see the range closed. If not hours should be shortened, types of rapid fire weapons should be banned or their use monitored. The noise of gunfire disrupts the natural quiet of the surrounding area for many miles. Thank you.

The shooting range probably did not disturb many neighbors when it was built. But there are a lot more people (including us) living now within hearing distance of the noise generated by the weapons. We moved to this area to live in the peace and quiet, which we do not now have with the regular hooting going on disturbing our peace and quiet. We wish the shooting range would be closed permanently.

I have never been to Reifsnider State Forest. My connection to it is as a resident of Innsbrook. Our cabin is on the western side, just a couple of miles from Reifsnider, and in the past year there haven't been more than a few days without the sound of gunshots in the air. Some days it sounds like there's a full-on battle over there. I would LOVE it if there were no shooting range at Reifsnider. However, I don't know what other options are available to the public. If Reifsnider is their ONLY option then I would request that the management team take a good look at ways to reduce the noise pollution that extends from the shooting range in a 5-10 mile radius around it. Sound abatement options such as earthen berms, concrete sound mufflers, and vegetative buffers. There are benefits to the shooters here as well as us neighbors. Thanks so much!

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the area plan for the Reifsnider State Forest.

You have stated that "The desired future condition of the Frank, Emma Elizabeth, and Edna Reifsnider State Forest (SF) is a healthy forest/woodland complex." I could not agree more. We need to leave to our children and grandchildren the opportunity to experience forests and woodlands as we found them years ago, uncontaminated by modern disruptions and distractions.

In that light, I want to comment on the very negative aspects of the presence of the shooting range in Reifsnider. Certainly, the noise associated with that operation is most disruptive of anyone's enjoyment of the peace and quiet expected with a visit to a State Forest. Our home is just East of Schuetzenground Road and is constantly bombarded with the noise of the shooting range.

There are adequate facilities operated by the Missouri Department of Conservation at the August Busch Wildlife area and the range off of Antire Road/I-44. In both cases, these ranges are fairly well separated from residential properties that would be disrupted by the firing of guns. Importantly, these Dept of Cons operations are closely supervised for safety and proper etiquette.

I am a hunter and I have used both of the Dept. of Conservation ranges discussed above. I have never seen the indiscriminant, rapid firing mayhem that I hear at Reifsnider. It is not uncommon to hear a barrage of 30 rounds, obviously from the same weapon, in 10 seconds. Automatic? Hard to say. But certainly irresponsible. Without supervision, anything goes.

Residential presence around Reifsnider has grown to the point where the firing range does not have a reasonable presence.

If you are going to keep it, I urge you to provide disciplined supervision to eliminate the abuses.

Lead in the stream could be reduced perhaps by limiting the rifle range use to a select few days and hours per week. It would also give my family and our neighbors at Innsbrook a break from the semi automatic gun fire and random gunfire that we experience nearly everyday throughout the year from sun up to sun down. Maybe can we just have Sunday mornings' peace?

Also, the park seems very limited in its scope for the the general population. It seems like it is

geared for hunting. I'm fine with that, except I would like to see more hiking trails on this 1,300 acre tract. It would add to its appeal to a greater portion of your surrounding population. Given the expanding residential population of Warren County, a nice hiking trail system would be ideal.

Otherwise, I like your stated goals. Not sure about the expanding part, when 1300 acres is already a pretty big management job.

I'm very unhappy with the gun range at Reifsnider. The gunfire is loud and often begins at daybreak. There is no restriction on the shells - some sound like cannons. The noise makes it impossible to sleep and is nerve wracking. It makes me uncomfortable to be out walking or working because I'm not really sure where the gunfire is coming from or going,

The Village of Innsbrook, population at 2010 census being 552, lies adjacent to and East of Reifsnider. The gunfire noise from the shooting range can be heard by virtually every one of the 552 residents. In addition the Village contains the Innsbrook Resort which adds over 1000 recreational chalet dwellings often used, principally in the Spring, Summer and Fall during weekends. I have received some resident complaints about the gunfire noise. We are meeting with MDC representatives in January to discuss this situation. I also know that some residents use and appreciate the range. Perhaps measures could be taken to limit the dates and times of day the range can be used (not early in the morning), and some noise abatement measures could be considered.

I was very concerned to read about the Charrette tributary levels due to the shooting range. Where was this water measured? Where does this tributary flow and what steps are being discussed to clean this up immediately and prevent future polluting of our waters?

December 25, 2013

Missouri Department of Conservation St. Louis Regional Office
2360 Hwy. D
St. Charles, MO 63305

RE: Public Comment on Reifsnider State Forest Management Plan

I feel privileged as a Warren County resident to have a State Forest as beautiful as Reifsnider nearby and appreciate the work of MDC employees in their stewardship. Thank you for considering the following comments and questions from my review as an individual of the Draft Ten Year Area Management Plan.

1. The plan appears not to acknowledge the rapid growth of the surrounding Warren County, the 3rd fastest growing county in the state, from a largely rural county to a semi-urban county which is likely to continue if not accelerate in the next ten years. What impact will this population growth with bordering development and land use changes have on the State Forest and the public's use or expectations for it? As example, if the county does not develop its own recreational areas and parks during the next ten years, how might this impact this State Forest or

render the plan obsolete?

2. Under working relationship with neighbors, does this include the neighboring Village of Innsbrook and Innsbrook Resort where I reside which encompasses an area adjacent near the State Forest with even larger acreage of forests and habitat? How might the continued development of Innsbrook impact the wildlife patterns and habitat needs of the State Forest? How can the MDC and the Village of Innsbrook or Innsbrook Resort collaborate together to preserve and protect our natural resources in a symbiotic manner, especially since they represent the two largest landowners of the county?

3. Writing this public comment on Christmas Day after just returning from a family holiday hike inside Innsbrook, my experience of the Missouri outdoors on this holiday was disrupted by the near non-stop sound of firearms coming from the State Forest shooting range, including rapid-fire automatic weapons that made me feel like I was adjacent to a battlefield. Why is it allowable that an activity in the State Forest infringe upon the rights of neighboring residents to peacefully enjoy Missouri's great outdoors without this nuisance?

4. With regards to the shooting range, how has the volume of users, type of users (local residents, St. Louis day-trip, hunters, gun enthusiasts, clubs, etc.) and type of firearms being used changed in the past ten years? If the shooting range is unmanned, how is this information collected and tracked and if not, shouldn't it be? What can be projected in the volume and type of use during the next ten years? Have there not been complaints from area residents about noise pollution coming from the shooting range, especially the resort homes of Innsbrook, and where is this referenced in the plan? If complaints have already been received, or can reasonably be expected to increase with the growth of nearby residential properties and growth in range usage, can additional sound barriers be constructed, hours limited, or type of weapons restricted? How are existing regulations enforced without the range being manned or patrolled routinely? Is there an expectation or burden on the Warren County Sheriff's office to police or enforce shooting range regulations? As Warren County grows around the State Forest, and St. Louis sprawls into Warren County, is an open air shooting range at an increasingly urban location compatible and viable for the long term?

5. Given the importance of lakes, stream water quality, and water recreation within Warren County and Innsbrook, the reference to pollution of Charrette Creek tributaries was appreciated but disturbing, especially that of waste and lead runoff from the shooting range. If the following questions are not covered in the management plan, where can they be addressed: how is the toxic pollution being monitored, is it by an independent agency like the DNR, have allowables been exceeded and reported, is there a non-compliance issue, if so what is the remediation plan, and who owns it?

6. How might climate change and extreme weather events impact a State Forest like Reifsnider and how does the MDC plan for such possibilities? Related to this topic, can an economic value be put on State Forests in their capacity to capture and store carbon? Can this value help MDC to justify the long term maintenance and survival of State Forests? If so, how can the carbon sequestration value of the forest be recognized and become part of the plan? Are there innovative opportunities for MDC to solicit greater public support of State Forests by, as an example, offering carbon credits for adoption or purchase by residents to help sponsor our State Forests?

Thank you for considering these public comments and questions as you plan forward.

Regards -

Regarding Section 7, Management Objective 4, Maintain the Unstaffed Shooting Range. After having lived within earshot of this range for 2 years, and having used the shooting range this year to sight in my deer rifle, I believe that this range needs to be staffed for safety reasons, at least on the weekends. It seems that many folks travel to use this range, because they can do things and shoot things here that they would not be allowed to at a staffed range. The volume of litter and shot-up debris at this site is staggering. Also staggering is the amount of shooting that takes place here beginning at 7 AM or so most weekend mornings. I would like to see this site staffed on the weekends to manage what appears to me to be problem behavior. While I realize that some of these folks may migrate to other unstaffed ranges, perhaps most would begin behaving in a safer manner with their weapons.

I enjoy everything about Reifsnider Forest except the shooting range. It seems like so many of the issues listed could be solved by getting rid of the range. I enjoy hunting and the outdoors but this shooting range actually scares me.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Reifsnider State Forest Plan. As an Innsbrook home owner on the west side of Alpine Lake, the Reifsnider Forest Plan and future expansion plans impact me. The plan supports the primary mission to manage and improve the forest and woodland health, wildlife habitat, and provide the public opportunities for hunting, fishing, hiking, and viewing wildlife.

The key features of the plan where I'd like to comment are:

1.) My most significant concern is the lead contamination in a watershed area affecting the neighboring land owners due to the possibility of lead may contaminate local wells and/or other nearby recreation areas. The removal of lead should be the primary and immediate focus;

2.) I would recommend that the hours of operation to be reduced to the public from sunrise to sunset;

3.) The Plan should specify natural or organic treatments to address insect infestations. This is directed to management of forest and ponds. At no time should pesticides or herbicide be used due to the proximity of a water shed and possible contamination of well water and/or aqua filter;

4.) More information is requested to gain a better understanding of the management of the riparian forests according to MDC guidelines;

5.) Assuming the plan does increase parking and recreational activities increase use of the park, a traffic study needs to be conducted to insure that Schuetzengrund road can support additional use.

The road to the shooting range crosses a small creek and during rains or winter snows it is almost impossible to enter the area. Can this be corrected or improved?

My family enjoy this area and the range. Thank you

MDC should consider adding to the plan some areas for grouse habitat, and grouse stocking/restocking being relatively close to the current remaining Missouri population of ruffed grouse.

Also should evaluate the shooting range use to see if an expansion of the facility would be utilized.

Thank you for taking comments.

Unstaffed shooting range is unsafe and a nuisance. PLEASE:

1. restrict shooting hours to daylight
2. remove lead contamination and stop further lead accumulation
3. close the shooting range or provide safety supervision
4. ban alcohol consumption at the shooting range

Our family used the shooting range at Reifsnider and found it to be unsafe and unsupervised. Beer and shooting don't mix!

The park itself was unkempt.

It's is wonderful to have a State Forest in our area, but it needs to be cared for.

Please consider regrading or further improvement of the "stable water crossing" of Charrette Creek in Reifsnider State Forest. Although no changes are currently recommended in the plan as of 12/2013, I could not cross it in a 2-wheel drive pickup without serious concerns about being able to get back out due to the steep grade on each side of the crossing and poor gravel quality. I would not consider crossing it in anything but a 4-wheel drive vehicle. This limits access and enjoyment for many, as the crossing is on the main access road. Thanks for your work to conserve the area for the future.

Appendix L. Draft Rockwoods Reservation Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (December 1-31, 2013)

I'm disappointed by your decision to exclude rock climbing in Rockwoods Reservation.
<p>I believe further dialog should be had regarding the issue of climbing on the Rockwood Reservation. A large network of Midwestern climbers, especially from Missouri, are very willing to pursue this issue, including myself. Please don't oversimplify the issue and make a blind judgement without fully considering the potential benefits of developing climbing at Rockwood Reservation.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>
<p>The omitting of allowing rock climbing at Rockwood reservation does not seem fair to the local populace. This includes not only children who will lack the opportunity to experience the joy of rock climbing in a safe and convenient place but also the hundreds of dedicated rock climbers who live in the area who are more than willing to develop and maintain the area. The MDC does not need to manage Rockwood reservation climbing at all. All cliffs are able to be climbed on with a top rope or trad climbing. It would be a shame if the use of these bluffs were not allowed any further.</p>
<p>I would like to see this area opened up to Rock Climbers. There is a large group of climbers in the MO/KS area alone that would be very interested and supportive of developing and maintaining local areas in order to raise interest for the sport and reduce the out of state travel needed to enjoy it.</p>
<p>There is a growing community of extremely responsible rock climbers in St Louis and Columbia that have been developing the sport in a safe and accessible way for public use.</p> <p>Climbing should be allowed at Rockwoods Reservation because "climbing is a legitimate and longstanding use of our nation's public lands. Rock climbing, ice climbing, bouldering and mountaineering are practiced in many places on our nation's diverse public lands. Throughout our National Park System, as administered by the National Park Service, climbing is considered a "welcomed and historical use." Climbing is also a welcomed and historical use on other agency lands including hundreds of sites managed by the US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, US Fish & Wildlife Service, and Army Corp of Engineers. At the state and regional level, climbing is equally popular."</p> <p>http://www.accessfund.org/site/c.tmL5KhNWLrH/b.5040477/k.6068/Climbing_on_Public_Land.htm</p>

I don't see how rock climbing will offset other activities allowed at Rockwood Reservation. Rock climbing will both bring in more visitors along with with a renewed interest in the reservation. Typically climbers have a heightened sense of environmental responsibility as well as high participation levels in activism. Climbers tend to appreciate the limited resources that we are allowed to use. As we speak there are efforts to save climbing land in Southern IL call The Holy Boulders.

https://www.kintera.org/site/c.tmL5KhNWLrH/b.8371223/k.C7CB/Protect_Whats_Holy/apps/ka/sd/donor.asp?c=tmL5KhNWLrH&b=8371223&en=fgLRKRPsFfLKKROBI9KEIVOGlpIZL8MCKcILKXOGJgLNi0OIKuH

Why is rock climbing not allowed at Rockwoods? The doc doesn't explain how that decision was reached. People have been climbing on other public lands in America for decades. Climbing is a welcomed activity in designated areas of National Park lands, so why not at Rockwoods? It appears that the future plan for Rockwood includes improvements to the hiking trails, which will appeal to a large number of people, but opening some areas to climbing would also enhance the park,

I was saddened to hear that the MDC's plans do not include providing access to any of these areas for rock climbing. As a community, rock climbers have historically been strong advocates and partners in conservation of natural areas and their precious resources. Our sport raises awareness of these areas, particularly with the younger generations who will eventually be charged with their care. It seems that there could be a reasonable agreement reached through which access - within set parameters - could be granted for rock climbing. Even if this was done on a test basis, I think the MDC would be pleasantly surprised at the support and energy the climbing community can bring to the organization's conservation efforts.

"To balance requests for a wide variety of activities within the Constitutional mission of the Department of Conservation, rock climbing will not be allowed at Rockwoods Reservation"

What does this even mean? Does rock climbing somehow eliminate multiple other activities that are in higher demand? These are weasel words. Please explain.

Thank you so much for continuing to allow dogs at Rockwoods. Also, I am very glad that you decided to NOT allow bikes or horses on the trails. Thanks, too, for keeping the gate shut to vehicles (at the north end). Great 10-year plan!! :)

I still cannot understand why Outdoor Rock Climbing has continued to be excluded from the Missouri parks plan. Rock climbing is the fastest growing outside activity and is growing. Outdoor recreation is a 646 billion dollar industry. Leaving out activities that are growing in popularity across the USA only causes outdoor enthusiasts and rock climbers alike to spend their dollars in other states such as Kentucky, Arkansas, and Tennessee. I think this is a disservice to Missourians who would really like to spend more time climbing in their own state...and draw other to the great state we live in.

<http://www.bostonglobe.com/business/2013/08/07/number-popularity-rock-gyms-climbing/JUikUNxTvyA6YGLUqco17I/story.html>

Thank you,

Please allow sport and traditional climbing at rockwoods.

Climbing is a legitimate and longstanding use of our nation's public lands. Rock climbing, ice climbing, bouldering and mountaineering are practiced in many places on our nation's diverse public lands. Throughout our National Park System, as administered by the National Park Service, climbing is considered a "welcomed and historical use." Climbing is also a welcomed and historical use on other agency lands including hundreds of sites managed by the US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, US Fish & Wildlife Service, and Army Corp of Engineers. At the state and regional level, climbing is equally popular.

Hello,

I have read the Area Plan for Rockwoods and as a rock climber and father of two young climbers, I found it disappointing that climbing is not to be allowed. I live in Kansas City but frequent St Louis for entertainment. Rock Climbing is a big part of my life and my community.

I am lucky to be able to travel and climb around the globe, but consider it a treasure that BLM, National Parks, Corps of Engineers and National Forest in the United States understand that Rock Climbing is a part of our history and is practiced most often by committed stewards of nature.

Please reconsider your approach with climbing. There are many of us who benefit from it, and our presence in the parks and wild places is a positive ingredient.

With Regards,
Jeremy Collins
Heartland Section Chair of the American Alpine Club

In what way does allowing rock climbing imbalance the variety of activities one could do at the Rockwood Reservation?

I understand that you are concerned about wasting labor and management resources; however, I don't understand how allowing climbing would waste resources.

Wouldn't you have to remove invasive species near the bluffs anyways? I have learned a lot about different fauna near the crags I climb in order to preserve the environment and save myself from rashes. I have even helped educate my friends on identifying different types of plants and animal tracks.

I understand that the state does not wish to open rock climbing at the Rockwood Reservation and I would appreciate a more detailed explanation as to why it would be against the best interest of the state to allow dedicated climbing areas.

It seems like the state could allow and restrict climbing on different bluffs. If you are using management resources to clarify that climbing is prohibited, you could use them to clarify where it is allowed and get a more diverse group of people attending the reservation (assuming that more people isn't the problem).

Climbing is inherently dangerous and it doesn't seem like the state would be liable for accidents that happened. If it were, climbing wouldn't be allowed at Johnson Shut-ins and Elephant Rock. Furthermore, Rope climbing results in fewer injuries than bouldering (which is what is easily accessible here in Missouri). The Rockwood reservation offers features that are not common to other local climbing areas.

If you're not liable for accidents, already utilizing management resources for clarifying conditions of climbing (that it's not allowed), and already clearing invasive species from the bluffs I can't understand why it is disadvantageous for the reserve to continue restricting climbing.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

I believe it is a mistake to allow rock climbing in this area. The available rock is a key attraction of this area, and regulation which disallows use of this resource acts against public interest. Many organizations exist to facilitate safe access to rock climbing areas. In particular, the Access Fund and Illinois Climbers Association are experienced in addressing the challenges associated with allowing rock climbing in public or private areas.

In response to the MDC's following statement:

"Challenge: There is interest in allowing rock climbing at Rockwoods Reservation. However, after careful consideration of this request, and to balance requests for a wide variety of activities within the Constitutional mission of the Department of Conservation, rock climbing will not be allowed at Rockwoods Reservation"

The KEY words being "balance requests", however, as I recall, rock climbing at Rockwoods was the number ONE request from the public.

Though, it is stated that rock climbing activities do not fall within the interests of the Department of Conservation, I would advise you to research Grayson Highlands State Park in Virginia, which is operated by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation. The introduction of bouldering (a form of rock climbing) has been a valuable asset to Grayson Highlands and is a valid form of outdoor recreation for this park. From DCR of Virginia's website:
http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state_parks/gra.shtml

Grayson Highlands is known as the best bouldering site in Virginia. On the park's mountainous slopes are four main boulder fields and three smaller fields with more than 700 named climbing routes, also known as problems. The park's geology, which is unique in the Southeast, makes it well-suited to bouldering. Climbers will find rhyolite at higher elevations as well as a metaconglomerate in a quartzite matrix elsewhere in the park. These provide steep faces with angular features including rails, flakes and edges that ensure bouldering opportunities for climbers of all skill levels.

Summer weather at the park is ideal for bouldering. Several boulder fields have an elevation of more than 4,900 feet, with temperatures in the 70s and cool breezes that allow climbing throughout summer.

The park welcomes climbers to enjoy bouldering opportunities but requires that Leave No Trace ethics be followed. Ropes and the chipping of rocks are not allowed. Climbing is inherently dangerous; all safety precautions should be taken. Stop by the contact station or office to register as a climber in case of emergency.

The park has two crash pads available for rent. It also sells chalk, chalk bags, cleaning brushes and the Grayson Highlands Bouldering Guidebook. For more information about the bouldering opportunities at Grayson Highlands, visit the Mountain Project.

http://graysonhighlandsbouldering.com/2013/07/31/a-va-bouldering-milestone-the-grand-opening-of-the-split-rock-bouldering-trail/?relatedposts_exclude=620

Well-managed rock climbing is a valid use of wilderness areas and has a place in publicly-owned lands. I would encourage you to reconsider climbing as a valuable addition to Rockwoods and consider climbing as a wonderful incentive to encourage physical activity in Missouri's great outdoors.

Sincerely,

Rock climbing at Rockwoods Reservation is a legitimate recreational opportunity that is tremendous way to connect people to nature. I have known countless people who couldn't care less about the environment and outdoors until they discovered rock climbing and now they are tireless advocates for nature and the outdoors. Many of Missouri's finest climbing areas happen to be located on MDC lands and are closed to rock climbing. Why is this? In Arkansas, the NPS has embraced rock climbing and has had a tremendous affect on tourism and local interest in nature. If you are willing to consider geocaching, mushroom hunting and biking then there is no reason to not allow rock climbing.

Why when you name is Conservation do you consider climbing not worth conserving, pretty ignorant really, its just another way to attract more people to the state witch brings more revenue to everyone, including conservation, but hey you got it all figured out.

In the plan overview I did not see any information regarding horse trails. With the number of existing trails and miles in the park, there should be access given to the equestrian community that have made up an extensive amount of the population of Wildwood including large property owners that border the park. I see that more access for bikes and bike trails are planned. The same consideration should be given to equine.

Considering the MDC's constitutional mission to facilitate and provide opportunities for ALL citizens to enjoy Missouri's natural resources, I believe that the MDC has the responsibility to allow public climbing access to the cliffs and boulders on its lands. Given that the MDC allows, and even promotes, other recreational activities (e.g. paddling, mountain biking, and hiking), it is hard to understand why the MDC refuses to allow rock climbing.

There are many benefits to opening rock climbing access at Rockwoods. Rock climbing has documented benefits to local economies. The presence of a climbing area in the St. Louis metropolitan region results in a more attractive place to live and work. And it provides another opportunity for Missouri's citizens to lead an active and engaged life in the outdoors.

The local rock climbing community and local and national climbing organizations are willing to partner with the MDC in developing a management plan that returns public access to the cliffs and boulders at Rockwoods Reservation. I want to see this happen.

Everything in the document seems to me as a very good idea.

Two additional comments:

1. I'm sorry we cannot accomodate the 'climbing community' at Rockwoods. Rock climbing is a huge sport now all over the country.

2. The immediate gardens around the visitor center need considerable improvement to represent the aesthetic, practical and econonmic value of native plants to community homeowners. Their stewardship of their own natural communities can be fowarded by an updated model at Rockwoods. I understand the problem with deer browse. This can be addressed with aromatic plants & signage around the butterfly/shrubbery gardens at Rockwoods.

3. Bee / insect / pollinator/bird education is needed right away. We are educating the public about trees & forested habitat (the big picture). Additionally we should balance the big picture with the little picture by offering education about little stuff like insects and their importance to the ecosysem. This would encourage homeowner/family stewardship in their backyards, extending wildlife corridors that equally support Rockwoods. For minimal cost and maintainance, we could have an exhibit that encourages growing native plants for pollinators and birds.

Everything in the document seems to me as a very good idea.

Two additional comments:

1. I'm sorry we cannot accomodate the 'climbing community' at Rockwoods. Rock climbing is a huge sport now all over the country.

2. The immediate gardens around the visitor center need considerable improvement to represent the aesthetic, practical and econonmic value of native plants to community homeowners. Their stewardship of their own natural communities can be fowarded by an updated model at Rockwoods. I understand the problem with deer browse. This can be addressed with aromatic plants & signage around the butterfly/shrubbery gardens at Rockwoods.

3. Bee / insect / pollinator/bird education is needed right away. We are educating the public about trees & forested habitat (the big picture). Additionally we should balance the big picture with the little picture by offering education about little stuff like insects and their importance to the ecosysem. This would encourage homeowner/family stewardship in their backyards, extending wildlife corridors that equally support Rockwoods. For minimal cost and maintainance, we could have an exhibit that encourages growing native plants for pollinators and birds.

I think that it is ridiculous that the visitor center is not open on Saturday and Sunday, when the VAST majority of visitors are there. I hike at Rockwoods often and I see up to 20 plus cars outside the visitor center on weekends. During the week, there are only a few visitors. At those times, I see quite a few staff members and it's not at all clear what they are doing. You are thinking of YOUR needs, not the people who pay for and use the park. Sure, everyone wants to have the weekend off. But have only a small staff during the week, or rotate shifts, so that there would be at least one staff member in the visitor center.

Dear MDC,

As I understand it, the Missouri Department of Conservation plans to continue its ban on rock climbing at Rockwoods Reservation. This decision has been made despite overwhelming public input requesting public rock climbing access at Rockwoods—an area that is not only of recreational importance to climbers, but is also of cultural and historical significance to the development of rock climbing in the state of Missouri.

Considering the MDC's constitutional mission to facilitate and provide opportunities for all citizens to enjoy Missouri's natural resources, I believe that the MDC has the responsibility to allow public climbing access to the cliffs and boulders on its lands. Given that the MDC allows, and even promotes, other recreational activities (e.g. paddling, mountain biking, and hiking), it is hard to understand why the MDC refuses to allow rock climbing.

There are many benefits to opening rock climbing access at Rockwoods. Rock climbing has documented benefits to local economies. The presence of a climbing area in the St. Louis metropolitan region results in a more attractive place to live and work. And it provides another opportunity for Missouri's citizens to lead an active and engaged life in the outdoors.

The local rock climbing community and local and national climbing organizations are willing to partner with the MDC in developing a management plan that returns public access to the cliffs and boulders at Rockwoods Reservation.

Please reconsider the decision to close Rockwoods Reservation to climbing access.

Yours,

Please make public trail maintenance or invasive species removal workdays. I also am in favor of proactive prescribed burning to manage forests (thinning or removing maples, overcrowded areas) and to expose degraded glade landscapes. I favor utilizing best glade management practices observed by researchers at Tyson Research center and involving the public in prescribed burns.

I favor showcasing of the remediated areas to encourage public understanding of how these management practices improve the ecosystem.

I propose the organization of a Bioblitz at Rockwoods in late spring/early summer involving a collaboration between academics in the region and public and other nature-focused groups such as Nature Conservancy, Sierra Club, Master Conservationists, MDC etc. This will highlight the value of the area so close to a metropolitan area and encourage support for the management efforts over the next ten years.

I am in favor of allowing off trail access for mushroom hunting and wildlife viewing.

I am not in favor of opening the area to equestrian or biking or motorized off trail or on trail vehicles.

I am not in favor of opening the caves to the public.

I favor managed hunts in the area and am open to increasing the number of managed hunts or deer harvested to aggressively manage the population.

A few comments on the draft Area Plan:

1. Thank you for accepting my trail improvement suggestions (Public Use Strategies 1.2 and 1.3). I'll be looking forward to trying them out in the near future.
2. Thanks also for keeping Rockwoods trails off limits to bikes and horses. What they would have done to them is not pleasant to imagine. Your wise decision will preserve Rockwoods as the prime destination for area hikers.
3. In regard to Public Use Strategy 1.7, the gradual conversion of the Trail Among the Trees to a crushed rock surface as the asphalt degrades:

I hope this does not mean you will be covering the entire trail with crushed rock. I think most people come to Rockwoods to get "back to nature" for a brief time, and to get away from the man-made. So it would be better to leave the trail in as natural a state as possible, reserving the crushed rock for "problem" sections that are prone to erosion or poor drainage (mud).

A smaller-gauge crushed rock ("pea gravel" ?) would make for a more comfortable walking surface for all ages and abilities of trail users.

Earth-tone rocks would be a much more natural and attractive choice than standard white/gray gravel. I'm thinking of the orange-, red-, and tan-tinted rocks that can be found in southeast Missouri (not sure of their geological names). In my opinion, a trail of standard gravel has no more natural appeal or attractiveness than a service road. It's just plain boring and lackluster. Since the Trail Among the Trees could be considered as Rockwoods "showcase" trail with its best and most varied scenery, I think it deserves better. A more interesting and attractive trail surface would likely bring more return visits.

Email (12-13-2013) The Missouri Department of Conservation plans to continue its ban on rock climbing at Rockwoods Reservation. This decision has been made despite overwhelming public input requesting public rock climbing access at Rockwoods—an area that is not only of recreational importance to climbers, but is also of cultural and historical significance to the development of rock climbing in the state of Missouri.

Considering the MDC's constitutional mission to facilitate and provide opportunities for all citizens to enjoy Missouri's natural resources, I believe that the MDC has the responsibility to allow public climbing access to the cliffs and boulders on its lands. Given that the MDC allows, and even promotes, other recreational activities (e.g. paddling, mountain biking, and hiking), it is hard to understand why the MDC refuses to allow rock climbing.

There are many benefits to opening rock climbing access at Rockwoods. Rock climbing has documented benefits to local economies. The presence of a climbing area in the St. Louis metropolitan region results in a more attractive place to live and work. And it provides another opportunity for Missouri's citizens to lead an active and engaged life in the outdoors.

The local rock climbing community and local and national climbing organizations are willing to partner with the MDC in developing a management plan that returns public access to the cliffs and boulders at Rockwoods Reservation.

Email (12/13/2013) I love my family and the outdoors. For the past 15 years I have used rock climbing to foster a bond with my children. More than any other activity including team sports, camping, Indian Guide and Princess programs, scuba, skiing and what have you, rock climbing has been the venue through which we have grown together. My kids are now 26 and 24, respectively and we look forward to continuing this activity with the next generation.

It is imperative that parks and wilderness areas include rock climbing as part of the public's enjoyment of our natural resources. We (rock climbers) participate in many programs coordinated with park management to build trails, clean-up and preserve wilderness areas. A well managed recreation area can leverage the passion we have for the outdoors to help preserve our natural resources for future generations.

Please assure that rock climbing remains as a critical activity in our recreation areas.

Email (12/13/2013) I am writing you today to urge the MDC to re-evaluate Rockwoods and other potential areas with the local climbing community, and allow climbing where appropriate.

MDC has not heeded the public's desire for rock climbing at Rockwoods Reservation citing inconsistency between rock climbing and the MDC mission, yet MDC endorses mountain biking, hiking, and other similar recreational activities on MDC lands. Climbers share MDC's conservation and stewardship ethic, and have a long track record of resource protection and management partnerships.

To avoid liability concerns MDC should take no active role or responsibility for fixed anchors. The best alternative is for local climbers and climbing organizations to place and maintain fixed anchors at Rockwoods.

Climbing has well-documented benefits to local economies and will generate income for local businesses. A climbing area in Missouri's major metropolitan area will result in a more attractive place to live and work.

I urge you to make Missouri a more attractive place to work, live and play.

Email (12/13/2013) Please consider letting rock climbers enjoy Rockwoods Reservation area. Please lift the ban on rock climbing. There are other ways to care for the rock, the use of instructional signs being one of them. You don't have to ban it from everyone.

I'm a 48 year old male and have been enjoying our parks for the last 30 years. To ban rock climbing is in my opinion short sighted.

Email (12/19/2013) As climbing continues to grow dramatically as a sport it is amazing to me that people are still considering bans on our public land. There is no difference between allowing climbing vs biking or hiking and treating those who climb differently is nothing but discrimination because the sport is more unfamiliar to those making decisions. People should be able to enjoy their land as long as they are not damaging it. If there are liability concerns find a solution as countless state and national parks have rather than just taking the easy way out.

- Climbing at Rockwoods Reservation has historical relevance beginning in the 1940's.
- MDC should re-evaluate Rockwoods and other potential areas with the local climbing community, and allow climbing where appropriate.
- MDC has unheeded the public's desire for rock climbing at Rockwoods Reservation citing inconsistency between rock climbing and the MDC mission, yet MDC endorses mountain biking, hiking, and other similar recreational activities on MDC lands.
- Climbers share MDC's conservation and stewardship ethic, and have a long track record of resource protection and management partnerships.
- To avoid liability concerns MDC should take no active role or responsibility for fixed anchors. The best alternative is for local climbers and climbing organizations to place and maintain fixed anchors at Rockwoods.
- Climbing has well-documented benefits to local economies and will generate income for local businesses.
- A climbing area in Missouri's major metropolitan area will result in a more attractive place to live and work.

Email (12/17/2013) I feel the MDC should re-evaluate Rockwoods and other potential areas with the local climbing community, and allow climbing where it is deemed appropriate. Climbers share the MDC's conservation and stewardship ethic, and have a long track record of resource protection and management partnerships.

The MDC has also unheeded the public's desire for rock climbing at Rockwoods Reservation, citing inconsistency between rock climbing and the MDC mission. Yet, the MDC endorses mountain biking, hiking, and other similar recreational activities on MDC lands. In light of this, it seems possible that the MDC does not understand the impacts that climbing does and does not have on an area, and should be directed to open a dialogue with the climbing community in order to learn more about the issues involved.

Regarding liability concerns, the MDC should take no active role or responsibility for fixed anchors. The best alternative is for local climbers and climbing organizations to place and maintain fixed anchors at Rockwoods.

Climbing also has many well-documented benefits to local economies and will generate income for local businesses. A climbing area in Missouri's major metropolitan area will result in a more attractive place to live and work.

Email (12/17/2013) Please keep the Rockwoods Reservation open to rock climbing. Promoting activities on public lands that have minimum impact encourages healthier lifestyles, and build support among your citizens for government conservation of natural resources. The proposed Rockwoods Reservation management plan supports mountain biking and hiking, two activities with similar environmental impact.

Rock climbing at Rockwoods has a history dating back to the 1940's. Public opinion has been overwhelmingly in support of allowing climbing here. Yet the proposed 10 year management plan specifically prohibits rock climbing.

Encourage the local community and climbing association or club to take an active role in trail and fixed anchor maintenance to reduce cost and eliminate liability. There are countless examples of this kind of private/public pairing at rock climbing venues elsewhere in the United States, such as the Washington State Parks and the Washington Climbers Coalition.

Its also been demonstrated that increasing public participation in public lands has an economic benefit to local businesses, and makes the local community a more attractive place to live and work.

Allowing rock climbing at Rockwoods Reservation clearly benefits the civic, environmental, and economic interests of Missouri. Please change the proposed 10 Year Management Plan to permit rock climbing.

Email (12/16/2013) Please reconsider opening Rockwoods to recreational climbing.

Climbing has well-documented benefits to local economies and will generate income for local businesses.

A climbing area in Missouri's major metropolitan area will result in a more attractive place to live and work.

Climbing at Rockwoods Reservation has historical relevance beginning in the 1940's when Tom Hornbein first began exploring the 70-foot sandstone cliff.

MDC should re-evaluate Rockwoods and other potential areas with the local climbing community, and allow climbing where appropriate.

MDC has unheeded the public's desire for rock climbing at Rockwoods Reservation citing inconsistency between rock climbing and the MDC mission, yet MDC endorses mountain biking, hiking, and other similar recreational activities on MDC lands.

Climbers share MDC's conservation and stewardship ethic, and have a long track record of resource protection and management partnerships.

To avoid liability concerns MDC should take no active role or responsibility for fixed anchors. The best alternative is for local climbers and climbing organizations to place and maintain fixed anchors at Rockwoods.

While MDC has concerns about potential liability, fixed anchors, and other climbing management issues, local climbers and Access Fund are committed to being key partners in this evaluation and management process. MDC needs to also consider that rock climbing has well-documented economic benefits to local economies and will unarguably contribute to the quality of life for many residents of Missouri's major metropolitan area.

Email (12/16/2013) I would like to encourage you to support rock climbing as an appropriate recreational activity at Rockwoods Reservation. I was very disturbed when I learned that the new management plan bans rock climbing. While I do not live in Missouri, I am a frequent visitor to the state. My parents live in Rolla and my sister lives in Florissant. Rockwoods Reservation is a very convenient location for me to enjoy rock climbing, as well as to introduce the sport to my 6-year old twin sons, niece and nephew.

I believe there has been a public request to continue to allow rock climbing at Rockwoods Reservation. Why does the new plan allow mountain biking and hiking but not rock climbing? Climbers share the ethic for conservation and stewardship with the Missouri Department of Conservation. Local climbers and climbing organizations are willing to place and maintain fixed anchors at Rockwoods. Allowing climbing would benefit local economies as climbers visit the area. It would also make the St. Louis metro area a more appealing place to live and work.

I urge you to reconsider allowing climbing at Rockwoods Reservation, as well as other local climbing areas.

Email (12/16/2013) Climbing at Rockwoods Reservation has historical relevance beginning in the 1940's.

MDC should re-evaluate Rockwoods and other potential areas with the local climbing community, and allow climbing where appropriate.

MDC has unheeded the public's desire for rock climbing at Rockwoods Reservation citing inconsistency between rock climbing and the MDC mission, yet MDC endorses mountain biking, hiking, and other similar recreational activities on MDC lands.

Climbers share MDC's conservation and stewardship ethic, and have a long track record of resource protection and management partnerships.

To avoid liability concerns MDC should take no active role or responsibility for fixed anchors. The best alternative is for local climbers and climbing organizations to place and maintain fixed anchors at Rockwoods.

Climbing has well-documented benefits to local economies and will generate income for local businesses.

A climbing area in Missouri's major metropolitan area will result in a more attractive place to live and work.

Email (12/16/2013) Please. Climbing brings lots of money to local communities. I moved from IL to CO for the climbing. Please allow climbing at rock woods and allow local climbing organizations to manage fixed anchors.

A climbing area in Missouri's major metropolitan area will result in a more attractive place to live and work.

Email (12/15/2013) I am writing to encourage you to allow for rock climbing at the Rockwoods Reservation in Missouri. The establishment of a location for outdoor rock climbing so close to St. Louis would greatly improve the accessibility of the outdoors to residents of the city and surrounding counties. Rock climbing outdoors is a safe and vigorous physical activity, much like mountain biking, which is allowed on many MDC lands. Currently the only outdoor climbing options near St. Louis are all located in Southern Illinois. Every weekend in the spring and fall, hundreds of climbers make their way from St. Louis to areas in the Shawnee National Forest. Allowing the development of a rock climbing cliff within Rockwoods, where there is a history of climbing dating back to the 1940s, would create environmental benefits from reduced fuel consumption (we wouldn't have to drive 2 1/2 hours each way to Illinois), and would keep more recreation dollars in Missouri. The skills needed to safely develop the cliffs at Rockwoods for climbing are already in St. Louis. Many climbers in St. Louis have spent the last 10 years equipping cliffs at Jackson Falls and other locations in Illinois with safe climbing gear. The same could be done here, as there is great interest in the community. We just ask that MDC allow climbing as a recreational activity at Rockwoods Reservation.

Email (12/15/2013) Please, please, please endorse rock climbing as an appropriate recreational activity at Rockwoods Reservation. We, as climbers, are visitors to these public lands as well. Please make it legal to climb at Rockwoods Reservation.

Email (12/14/2013) Climbing has been important to me for more than 25 years. Please consider the following points when determining your new policy for the Rockwoods area.

Climbing at Rockwoods Reservation has historical relevance beginning in the 1940's.

MDC should re-evaluate Rockwoods and other potential areas with the local climbing community, and allow climbing where appropriate.

MDC has unheeded the public's desire for rock climbing at Rockwoods Reservation citing inconsistency between rock climbing and the MDC mission, yet MDC endorses mountain biking, hiking, and other similar recreational activities on MDC lands.

Climbers share MDC's conservation and stewardship ethic, and have a long track record of resource protection and management partnerships.

To avoid liability concerns MDC should take no active role or responsibility for fixed anchors. The best alternative is for local climbers and climbing organizations to place and maintain fixed anchors at Rockwoods.

Climbing has well-documented benefits to local economies and will generate income for local businesses.

A climbing area in Missouri's major metropolitan area will result in a more attractive place to live and work.

Many Thanks for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Email 12/15/2013) Charlie, Jay Bob: Please allow rock climbing in Rockwoods reservation, climbers can only construct artificial walls for climbing. The natural rock is limited to where mother nature places these cliffs. Encouraging anything that gets people away from their TV's is a good thing for a leader to do.

Email 12/15/2013) Charlie, Jay Bob: Please allow rock climbing in Rockwoods reservation, climbers can only construct artificial walls for climbing. The natural rock is limited to where mother nature places these cliffs. Encouraging anything that gets people away from their TV's is a good thing for a leader to do.

Email (12/14/2013) Climbing at Rockwoods Reservation has historical relevance beginning in the 1940's.

MDC should re-evaluate Rockwoods and other potential areas with the local climbing community, and allow climbing where appropriate.

MDC has unheeded the public's desire for rock climbing at Rockwoods Reservation citing inconsistency between rock climbing and the MDC mission, yet MDC endorses mountain biking, hiking, and other similar recreational activities on MDC lands.

Climbers share MDC's conservation and stewardship ethic, and have a long track record of resource protection and management partnerships.

To avoid liability concerns MDC should take no active role or responsibility for fixed anchors. The best alternative is for local climbers and climbing organizations to place and maintain fixed anchors at Rockwoods.

Climbing has well-documented benefits to local economies and will generate income for local businesses.

A climbing area in Missouri's major metropolitan area will result in a more attractive place to live and work.

Email (12/13/2013) I ask you to urge Bob Ziehrer, MDC Director, to re-evaluate the proposed climbing ban at Rockwoods Reservation. Banning climbing there is wrong for the following reasons:

- Climbing at Rockwoods Reservation has historical relevance beginning in the 1940's.
- MDC should re-evaluate Rockwoods and other potential areas with the local climbing community, and allow climbing where appropriate.
- MDC has unheeded the public's desire for rock climbing at Rockwoods Reservation citing inconsistency between rock climbing and the MDC mission, yet MDC endorses mountain biking, hiking, and other similar recreational activities on MDC lands.
- Climbers share MDC's conservation and stewardship ethic, and have a long track record of resource protection and management partnerships.
- To avoid liability concerns MDC should take no active role or responsibility for fixed anchors. The best alternative is for local climbers and climbing organizations to place and maintain fixed anchors at Rockwoods.
- Climbing has well-documented benefits to local economies and will generate income for local businesses.
- A climbing area in Missouri's major metropolitan area will result in a more attractive place to live and work.

Email (12/13/2013) I would like to take a moment to address the MDC's attitude toward rock climbing as it relates to Rockwoods Reservation and petition you to consider including climbing among recreational activities encouraged on MDC land.

Climbing at Rockwoods has been going on since a well-known climber named Tom Hornbein visited in the 1940's. Geographical locations that offer climbing are appealing places to live. The integration of climbers in these communities benefits local economies and generates income for local businesses. The climbing community shares the MDC's common goals of conservation, resource stewardship, safety, and has a long track record of resource protection and management partnerships here in the US and internationally. The MDC has indicated that rock climbing is incongruent with their mission statement, yet they advocate hiking, mountain biking, and other similar activities on MDC land. I do realize that there are concerns regarding appropriate locations liability, climbing anchors, impact, and other climbing management issues. A committed group of local climbers and the Access Fund are asking for committed partnership with MCD to see these issues evaluated and addressed. This applies to Rockwoods, but also to other appropriate areas that MCD has refused to allow climbing in. Regarding fixed anchors specifically; MCD should take no active role in placing or maintaining fixed anchors in order to avoid liability issues.

Please lend your ear to the climbing community and consider our request for a fruitful, synergistic, partnership.

Email (12/13/2013) I am writing in regards to current MDC policy on rock climbing at Rockwood Reservation.

Missouri is fortunate to hold geologic features that can be climbed. I live on the Kansas of the Kansas City suburbs. As a climber I often need to travel long distances to get to climbable rock. Many of us flock to Arkansas (usually a 6 hour drive) on warm weekends. It would be nice to consider Rockwood a worthwhile climbing destination. I think it would be fantastic to make a weekend of climbing and hanging out in St. Louis. Unfortunately, The policies in place prevent me, and other climbers, from enjoying these cliffs.

As I understand, there has been record of climbing taking place at Rockwood since the 1940s. Climbing is an important part of American history. Why should Rockwood not continue this legacy? I understand that liability and risk of injury raises some eye brows. But just how policy can be enacted to close the area for climbing, policy that places the liability on the climbers can be put into place. The MDC encourages enjoying the outdoors? Why stop at hiking, biking, and camping? Climbing is a growing sport and by allowing climbing in Rockwood sales at local gear shops would increase and use of the park would increase.

Remember: this is Conservation. Not Preservation.

Email (12/13/2013) MDC should re-evaluate Rockwoods and other potential areas with the local climbing community, and allow climbing where appropriate.

While MDC has concerns about potential liability, fixed anchors, and other climbing management issues, local climbers and Access Fund are committed to being key partners in this evaluation and management process. MDC needs to also consider that rock climbing has well-documented economic benefits to local economies and will unarguably contribute to the quality of life for many residents of Missouri's major metropolitan area.

MDC has unheeded the public's desire for rock climbing at Rockwoods Reservation citing inconsistency between rock climbing and the MDC mission, yet MDC endorses mountain biking, hiking, and other similar recreational activities on MDC lands.

Climbers share MDC's conservation and stewardship ethic, and have a long track record of resource protection and management partnerships.

To avoid liability concerns MDC should take no active role or responsibility for fixed anchors. The best alternative is for local climbers and climbing organizations to place and maintain fixed anchors at Rockwoods.

A climbing area in Missouri's major metropolitan area will result in a more attractive place to live and work, while providing benefits to local economies and generating income for local businesses.

Email (12/13/2013) To whom it may concern, please consider the following:

- Climbing at Rockwoods Reservation has historical relevance beginning in the 1940's.
- MDC should re-evaluate Rockwoods and other potential areas with the local climbing community, and allow climbing where appropriate.
- MDC has unheeded the public's desire for rock climbing at Rockwoods Reservation citing inconsistency between rock climbing and the MDC mission, yet MDC endorses mountain biking, hiking, and other similar recreational activities on MDC lands.
- Climbers share MDC's conservation and stewardship ethic, and have a long track record of resource protection and management partnerships.
- To avoid liability concerns MDC should take no active role or responsibility for fixed anchors. The best alternative is for local climbers and climbing organizations to place and maintain fixed anchors at Rockwoods.
- Climbing has well-documented benefits to local economies and will generate income for local businesses.
- A climbing area in Missouri's major metropolitan area will result in a more attractive place to live and work.

Email (12/13/2013) I am writing this letter to state my concern regarding the upcoming decision governing recreation use at the Rockwoods Reservation. I believe that rock climbing is a fully legitimate and worthy recreational pastime that should be permitted at the Rockwoods Reservation. As a southern Illinois local I travel to that area of Missouri from time to time to take advantage of the other recreational activities provided, including hiking and canoeing. My wife and I would love to be able to travel to your great state to climb as well. Please carefully consider the points listed below before making any decision regarding acceptable recreational uses on MDC land.

-Climbing at Rockwoods Reservation has historical relevance beginning in the 1940's.

-MDC should re-evaluate Rockwoods and other potential areas with the local climbing community, and allow climbing where appropriate.

-MDC has unheeded the public's desire for rock climbing at Rockwoods Reservation citing inconsistency between rock climbing and the MDC mission, yet MDC endorses mountain biking, hiking, and other similar recreational activities on MDC lands.

-Climbers share MDC's conservation and stewardship ethic, and have a long track record of resource protection and management partnerships.

-To avoid liability concerns MDC should take no active role or responsibility for fixed anchors. The best alternative is for local climbers and climbing organizations to place and maintain fixed anchors at Rockwoods.

-Climbing has well-documented benefits to local economies and will generate income for local businesses.

-A climbing area in Missouri's major metropolitan area will result in a more attractive place to live and work.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this issue,

Email (12/13/2013) I encourage you to endorse rock climbing as an appropriate recreational activity at Rockwoods Reservation.

climbing is a low-impact activity which can take place harmoniously alongside other uses of the park.

thanks for your time.

Email (12/13/2013) I am writing in regard to the ban on rock climbing in Rockwoods Reservation. I am relatively new to the sport of rock climbing, so I cannot say that I remember a time when climbing was a legal activity in Rockwoods Reservation. In the last 2 years since I started climbing I have driven to Arkansas to climb outdoors and southern Illinois. Now that I am aware that there is an area local to St. Louis I cannot understand why it is not open to local climbers? Climbers, much like other outdoor loving people, are conservationist and environmental stewards. Opening Rockwoods Reservation to climbing would provide my family and I a local place to enjoy a sport that we have come to love as a family. We are also members at a local climbing gym, and I know from the time we have spent at the climbing gym that there are several other families just like us. Rock climbing as a sport has seen major growth in the last 5 years, with 2 new gyms opening in the St. Louis area bringing the total to 3 local climbing gyms. Most cities are lucky if they have one decent facility. This speaks volumes to the climbing community here in St. Louis, and could also be potentially tapped into by the Missouri Department of Conservation as a potential revenue stream. I am a nurse and my wife is a physician, so we could easily pick up and move to a state that shares our love for the outdoors, but we are hoping that Missouri will see that local outdoor climbing is a potential resource that citizens of St. Louis and the great state of Missouri should be able to enjoy.

Thank you for your time,

Email (12/12/2013) I'm writing you today to ask you to reconsider the proposed climbing ban at Rockwoods Reservation. As an active rock climber and involved citizen, I hope that you will come to see those of us who climb as a valid and as within the mission of the MDC to have recreational use of the land. Rock climbing is the major way that gives me a chance to be out in nature and enjoy the beautiful land that Missouri has to offer inspiring me further to help preserve and protect nature. I see no inconsistency between rock climbing and the MDC mission, yet the MDC endorses mountain biking, hiking, and other similar recreational activities on MDC lands. Rock climbers over the years have shown to be active and engaged in resource protection and management partnerships.

Climbing has well-documented benefits to local economies and will generate income for local businesses. A climbing area in Missouri's major metropolitan area will result in a more attractive place to live and work. In fact, as a resident of Missouri one of the attractions for myself moving to the state was discovering the wealth of activities that mirrored some of the activities I was able to enjoy while living in California.

While I understand that you may have further concerns around liability. What has worked successfully in other areas would be for MDC to take no active role or responsibility for fixed anchors. The best alternative is for local climbers and climbing organizations to place and maintain fixed anchors at Rockwoods.

Email (12/11/2013) Please take the following points into consideration in concern to the proposed Rockwoods Reservation Ten Year Area Management Plan

Climbing at Rockwoods Reservation has historical relevance beginning in the 1940's.

MDC should re-evaluate Rockwoods and other potential areas with the local climbing community, and allow climbing where appropriate.

MDC has unheeded the public's desire for rock climbing at Rockwoods Reservation citing inconsistency between rock climbing and the MDC mission, yet MDC endorses mountain biking, hiking, and other similar recreational activities on MDC lands.

Climbers share MDC's conservation and stewardship ethic, and have a long track record of resource protection and management partnerships.

To avoid liability concerns MDC should take no active role or responsibility for fixed anchors. The best alternative is for local climbers and climbing organizations to place and maintain fixed anchors at Rockwoods.

Climbing has well-documented benefits to local economies and will generate income for local businesses.

A climbing area in Missouri's major metropolitan area will result in a more attractive place to live and work

Email (12/11/2013)I am not prone to writing long letters, just as you are not interested in reading them. Please open the Rockwoods Reservation to rock climbing. I am an avid outdoors men, a full time worker, and a soon to be graduate. While I'm sure you've heard a litany of reason for opening the reservation know this, I will vote for you if I see that you personally have taken action to encourage rock climbing in Missouri. I am politically active and will pay attention to your efforts in these coming years.

PS. Thank you for serving our great state. Public service positions and the men who hold them rarely get the thanks they deserve. I really appreciate you steping up and making the world a better place. For what its worth, no matter your decision in this matter I will still love living in Missouri. Have a happy Holiday.

Email (12/11/2013) As a Missourian I would love to use my state for all my outdoor recreational needs, but I have to export most of my outdoor hobbies to Arkansas. Why? Because of the ban on rock climbing at Redwoods Reservation by the Missouri Department of Conservation. The ban has gone on for to long. I ask that you investigate to why the MDC won't consider rock climbing as a recessional activity and continues to stop climbers of Missouri's effort to use the states natural resources in a non damaging and legal activity.

Email (12/11/2013) As a climber and someone who cares deeply about the preservation of Missouri I am please asking that the 10 year ban on climbing at Rockwoods Reservation areas. Climbing at Rockwoods has been a large part of the community and its involvement with the park since the early 1940's. The Missouri Department of Conservation has unheeded the public's desire for rock climbing at Rockwoods by making irrelevant and untruthful accusations between rock climbing and the Missouri Department of Conservation while still endorsing mountain biking, hiking and other similar recreational activities on Missouri Department of Conservation land.

Climbers share Missouri Department of Conservation's conservation and stewardship ethic, and have a long track record of resources protecting and management partnerships. To avoid liability concerns Missouri Department of Conservation should take no active role or responsibility for fixed anchors. The best alternative is for local climbers and climbing organizations to place and maintain fixed anchors at Rockwoods. Climbing has well-documented benefits to local economies and will generate income for local businesses. A climbing area in Missouri's major metropolitan area will result in a more attractive place to live and work.

Email (12/11/2013) I would like to share with you that I am a student at the University of Missouri and have a year and a half as a student. Also, my freshman year I didn't have any friends, I struggled with fitting in and finding the right group of friends. It wasn't until one random friend took me rock climbing at the end of my freshman year that I found my biggest passion and made the majority of my friends I still have today. Climbing is such a special activity to me and I would love for MDC to re-evaluate Rockwoods and other potential areas with the local climbing community, and allow climbing where appropriate. I understand that in your eyes there is a huge risk for climbers. However, to avoid liability concerns MDC should take no active role or responsibility for fixed anchors. The best alternative is for local climbers and climbing organizations to place and maintain fixed anchors at Rockwoods.

I can testify upon my behalf and as well as many others in the climbing community, thank you for your consideration.

Email (12/11/2013) As a lifelong resident of the State of Missouri, and an avid rock climber of 19 years, I urge you to please reconsider the ban on rock climbing at Rockwood Reservation Conservation Area. Climbing is a historic outdoor pursuit which appeals to all ages. In a culture in which our members, particularly youth, are becoming less and less active, we desperately need more opportunities, not fewer, to get people outside and active. Climbing is an activity which is allowed in both state and federally owned land all across the country. Organizations such as the Access Fund are more than happy to work with land managers to come to agreements and help form policies to allow the sport of rock climbing to happen on these public lands. When properly managed, climbing poses no more of a risk or liability than many other activities, such as hunting, horseback riding or mountain biking, which MDC allows to happen on their properties.

Thank you.

Email (12/13/2013) I am writing you today to urge the MDC to re-evaluate Rockwoods and other potential areas with the local climbing community, and allow climbing where appropriate.

MDC has not heeded the public's desire for rock climbing at Rockwoods Reservation citing inconsistency between rock climbing and the MDC mission, yet MDC endorses mountain biking, hiking, and other similar recreational activities on MDC lands. Climbers share MDC's conservation and stewardship ethic, and have a long track record of resource protection and management partnerships.

To avoid liability concerns MDC should take no active role or responsibility for fixed anchors. The best alternative is for local climbers and climbing organizations to place and maintain fixed anchors at Rockwoods.

Climbing has well-documented benefits to local economies and will generate income for local businesses. A climbing area in Missouri's major metropolitan area will result in a more attractive place to live and work.

I urge you to make Missouri a more attractive place to work, live and play.

PhoneCon (12/13/2013)). Allen has been a climber his entire life and has climbed all over the world. He is on ski patrol at Hidden Valley Ski Resort (Eureka, MO). He is going to ice climb in Colorado next week and wishes he could do climbing closer to home. He suggested looking into a climbers act piece of legislation similar to the skiers act in Colorado that prevents skiers from suing ski lodges. I explained that the liability issue was manageable according to our Legal Counsel. I then explained a little about the Department, our mission, and the time that this would take from fish, forest and wildlife centered management and activities. He thanked me for explaining and I assured him I would add his comments to others received during the comment period. He also asked that I e-mail him updates about the Rockwoods Reservation area plan.

Email (12/06/2013) Thanks for the note. I'm pleased you are progressing with the updated plan for MDC's Rockwoods Reservation. I think Glencoe Road within the Reservation boundary is a wonderful opportunity for a "share the road" facility. As you know, it's quite heavily used already and any effort to enhance visitor safety and experience is great.

I recall you and I discussed improving signage, especially in the area at the top of the hill near the visitor center and parking. District staff were not able to fund everything we had hoped for the coming 2014 Capital Budget year, but we were able to allocate a small amount within the Western Greenway for signage and related trail amenities. This area was in my mind as these budgets were negotiated. While available funding won't be enough to fully realize all that may be needed or desired, it should allow us to at least get started.

As far as legal requirements, we adhere to two guiding documents; the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) Guide for the Design of Bicycle Facilities and the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) published by the Federal Highway Administration. Because the Reservation resides in Wildwood, I don't know if they would have any additional requirements, but they too would use these resources I mention. Mr. Ryan Thomas is the City's Public Works Director. Perhaps you know Ryan? Another great resource would be Mr. Paul Wojciechowski. Paul works for Alta Planning + Design (a nationally renowned firm in the design of bicycle facilities), is a Wildwood resident and also was recently re-elected to the Wildwood City Council.

Your second question about the MOU and Cooperation Agreement is one I don't have an opinion on right now. Like you, I don't think it would be required, but I could also see a possible benefit should we collaboratively work together to fabricate and install some signage within MDC's property. Let's see how things evolve in 2014.

Finally, I wanted to introduce you to Mr. Patrick Owens, copied here. Patrick has worked in our office longer than I, and he will assume my project responsibilities in the Western Greenway. We've been very fortunate to have hired some new staff at Great Rivers Greenway, and because of this some greenway assignments are being reallocated. In 2014 and beyond, Patrick will be your primary contract here at the District, and I'll be around too to help with a smooth transition.

Take care, and have a nice weekend and happy Holidays too!

Email (12/30/2013) I am a rock climber and general outdoor enthusiast (climbing, hiking, mountain biking, camping, hunting, etc.) living in Memphis, Tennessee. I am concerned to hear that the draft Rockwoods Reservation Ten Year Area Management Plan includes a ban on rock climbing. Rockwoods has a rich climbing history beginning in the 1940s when Tom Hornbein, a famous American mountaineer who was born in St. Louis, began exploring the sandstone cliff. I ask that the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) reevaluate climbing at Rockwoods with the local climbing community and organizations such as The Access Fund, and allow climbing where appropriate.

The MDC is citing an inconsistency between rock climbing and the MDC mission, while supporting mountain biking, hiking, and other similar activities on MDC land. If the safety and environmental impacts of these other activities can be managed, then surely the same is true of rock climbing. Climbers as a group have a strong safety and environmental stewardship ethic that would support the efforts of MDC and create a powerful partnership in helping to protect Missouri's public lands.

My understanding is that MDC is concerned about liability related to fixed anchors. The best approach is for local climbers and climbing organizations to place and maintain fixed anchors at Rockwoods. This is common on other public lands and is effective in maintaining the safety of fixed anchors. We as climbers use them, and it is in our best interest to make sure that they are safely maintained.

Climbing has well-documented benefits to local economies and generates income for local businesses. I am currently considering a move to Missouri and one of the first things that I did as part of my evaluation is look for climbing areas near where I would be living. A climbing area in Missouri's major metropolitan area will result in a more attractive place to live and work.

Email (12/29/2013) As a long time climber and St Louis County resident, I wish you will reconsider MDC ban on rock climbing at Rockwood Reservation. There are very few climbing areas in Missouri, and banning climbing from Rockwood makes that problem worse. As an IT professional who is involved in recruiting, recreational options in the region are frequently asked about. It would be great if we had more instead of banning them.

Email (12/27/2013) As a native St. Louisian and supporter of the great outdoors, I highly recommend you stop the ban on climbing at the Rockwoods Reservation. As a former boy scout and uncles to several young scouts climbing has become part of the scout curriculum, but unfortunately many scouts have to travel several hours away to southern Illinois to climb, a trip that prevents several scouts from attending. The sport builds confidence and team building and we need that kind of growth and opportunity for our local scouts. As an member of the St. Louis climbing community I know we will supply and maintain the anchors and climbing routes and encourage the growth of the sport. This is a sport that has gained attention nationwide and will increase tourism activity in St. Louis. Please stop the ban at Rockwoods Reservation.

Email (12/21/2013) Please make climbing at Rockwoods possible for the public. Currently my wife and I spend 10-20 weekends every year driving hours to Illinois or Arkansas to climb; and I know numerous others, including large outdoor clubs, do the same. This is a lost economic opportunity for the region, and will be the primary factor behind our decision to leave St. Louis.

I would love to contribute to making this a reality. Feel free to contact me anytime: 864-616-1674

Email (12/20/2013) I am taking the time to write this letter because I feel very strongly about rock climbing. Keeping access open to public cliffs for current and future generations of climbers is essential. This crag is close to St. Louis, has historical meaning to the climbing community, and is a place I'd like to climb at - given the possibility!

Please consider the following points when acting, in your role, as a supporter of our nation's half million rock climbers! We are active members of the broader community; we vote, we are eco-friendly, and we are safe.

*Climbing at Rockwoods Reservation has historical relevance beginning in the 1940's.

- MDC should re-evaluate Rockwoods and other potential areas with the local climbing community, and allow climbing where appropriate.

- MDC has unheeded the public's desire for rock climbing at Rockwoods Reservation citing inconsistency between rock climbing and the MDC mission, yet MDC endorses mountain biking, hiking, and other similar recreational activities on MDC lands.

- Climbers share MDC's conservation and stewardship ethic, and have a long track record of resource protection and management partnerships.

- To avoid liability concerns MDC should take no active role or responsibility for fixed anchors. The best alternative is for local climbers and climbing organizations to place and maintain fixed anchors at Rockwoods.

- Climbing has well-documented benefits to local economies and will generate income for local businesses.

- A climbing area in Missouri's major metropolitan area will result in a more attractive place to live and work.

Thank you for your time. I hope to have the opportunity to climb at Rockwoods Reservation in the near future!

Email (12/11/2013) Climbing is very dear to a large number of Missouri Citizens and it will be a shame if it is pulled away from us. Through local organizations and national ones such as the Access Fund, climbers unite and take care of the grounds they play on. Please look into the improvements that have taken place in Northern Arkansas in conjunction with their governments; notably Sam's Throne. Many Missouri Climbers were instrumental in the development and continue to be instrumental in the upkeep. I know this as I was a large part of the team that organized and made it happen. I would love to help my own state but won't be able to if Missouri climbing areas and potential areas begin to be shut down by those who are likely unfamiliar with the community.

I have no idea why climbing does not align with the MDC's mission statement when mountain biking, hiking, floating and hunting do.

Please consider the recreational benefits that can come from climbing, tourism and free labor that most climbers are willing to offer to better our wonderful state's outdoor destinations. While I don't currently have the statistics to show, hard data can be acquired to show the benefits climbers can have on a community.

Email (12/13/2013) I am writing to oppose the continuation of a climbing ban at Rockwoods Reservation. Climbing can be a relatively safe activity, statistically safer than mountain biking or other allowed activities, and most climbers are safety-focused and believe in the environmental ethic of "leave no trace." Climbing is being unjustly singled out for a ban at this area.

Please consider the following points:

Climbing at Rockwoods Reservation has historical relevance beginning in the 1940's.

MDC should re-evaluate Rockwoods and other potential areas with the local climbing community, and allow climbing where appropriate.

MDC has unheeded the public's desire for rock climbing at Rockwoods Reservation citing inconsistency between rock climbing and the MDC mission, yet MDC endorses mountain biking, hiking, and other similar recreational activities on MDC lands.

Climbers share MDC's conservation and stewardship ethic, and have a long track record of resource protection and management partnerships.

To avoid liability concerns MDC should take no active role or responsibility for fixed anchors. The best alternative is for local climbers and climbing organizations to place and maintain fixed anchors at Rockwoods.

Climbing has well-documented benefits to local economies and will generate income for local businesses.

A climbing area in Missouri's major metropolitan area will result in a more attractive place to live and work.

Email (12/13/2013) Please consider ending the 10 year climbing ban. There are local climbers that would be happy to work to ensure that sustainable and safe climbing practices are followed. Furthermore:

Climbing at Rockwoods Reservation has historical relevance beginning in the 1940's.

MDC should re-evaluate Rockwoods and other potential areas with the local climbing community, and allow climbing where appropriate.

MDC has unheeded the public's desire for rock climbing at Rockwoods Reservation citing inconsistency between rock climbing and the MDC mission, yet MDC endorses mountain biking, hiking, and other similar recreational activities on MDC lands.

Climbers share MDC's conservation and stewardship ethic, and have a long track record of resource protection and management partnerships.

To avoid liability concerns MDC should take no active role or responsibility for fixed anchors. The best alternative is for local climbers and climbing organizations to place and maintain fixed anchors at Rockwoods.

Climbing has well-documented benefits to local economies and will generate income for local businesses.

A climbing area in Missouri's major metropolitan area will result in a more attractive place to live and work.

Email (12/13/2013) I am writing to urge the MDC to re-evaluate Rockwoods and other potential areas with the local climbing community, and allow climbing where appropriate.

Climbers share MDC's conservation and stewardship ethic, and have a long track record of resource protection and management partnerships. Also, climbing has well-documented benefits to local economies and will generate income for local businesses.

Thanks for your consideration.

Email (12/13/2013) Please open this area for climbing.

Appendix M. Draft Bee Hollow Area Plan Public Comments

Received during public comment period (December 1-31, 2013)

Managing and reducing populations of exotic species (Lespedeza sericea, Tall Fescue, and Reed Canary Grass) is strongly encouraged. I appreciate this in the actual management plan.

One of the ways to reduce exotic species and enhance wetlands is to reduce or eliminate row cropping wetlands and the fields that surround the wetlands.

The amount of disturbance needs to be significantly reduced. I was performing a wetland survey this past summer and there was significant row crops (corn) through the wetland sites. Furthermore, turnips were planted through the wetland as well.

Another aspect of managing Conservation Areas, in general, is to wash off mowing equipment after mowing through areas that are infested with exotic species and before mowing through non-infested areas. I have been to numerous CA areas (Chloe Lowery Marsh, Rebel Cove, Franklin Island, and etc.) where the mowing occurs first through populations of exotic species and then continue through native vegetation (often through a natural area or pristine section of the wetland).

Just my two-cents,
Sincerely,

I would like to see this area regulated as a Archery and Muzzleloading area only for deer.

1. Incorporate larger tracts of bottomland forests into the plan - not just expanded riparian corridors.
2. Eliminate all or most of the row crop agriculture. Create more emergent marshes in the current crop fields.
3. This C.A. has such great potential for native plants and wetland restoration. There is enough agriculture in the area, there are enough corn/soybean fields in northern Missouri.